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MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager’s Report
DT: April 16, 2019

Dear Board: Please see the following update for tonight’s meeting.

Vacant and Abandoned Building Committee: The Board heard a request to “re-activate” the VABC at its February meeting utilizing the guidelines on record a copy of which are included in the packets. The existing guidelines call for the VABC to meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. According to current information from the Town Clerk the seven-member committee is currently composed as follows:

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Current Incumbent</u> |
|--------------|------------------------|---|
| Chair | Building Inspector | Robert Legare |
| Vice-Chair | Fire Chief or Designee | Dep. Chf. Jeffrey Parker for Chief Joe Guarnera |
| Secretary | BOH Chair or Designee | Deborah Vondal |
| Member | Board of Selectmen | Rebecca Bialecki |
| Member | Board of Selectmen | Lee Chauvette |
| Member | Resident of Athol | Bruce Winters |
| Member | Resident of Athol | Robert Matthews |

The guidelines (which do not have a date or attribution) also state the positions are appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen and that Town Counsel, the Town Manager and Town Treasurer are non-voting members who shall provide information, assistance and input as needed. I know the Board wished to jump-start the committee and if all folks are re-appointed we can look to engage the VABC on May 21.

Pleasant Street Sidewalk Project Awarded: On this date upon the recommendation of the DPW Supt. the contract to repair and construct sidewalks from Main Street to the school campus in the amount of \$320,175.20 to A. Martins and Sons Construction, Inc., of Ludlow. Work is expected to be completed in advance of the 2019-2020 school year. Concrete sidewalks will be replaced with concrete while the new extension shall be bituminous concrete with a grass strip. This project was funded as part of a debt exclusion supplemented by Ch. 90 monies.

Downtown Planning Public Forum – May 14: A public forum to discuss high-level downtown planning initiatives will be held in the historic Carnegie portion of the Athol Public Library on Tuesday, May 14 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This forum builds upon a grant-funded exercise to envision short- and long-term action steps to improve conditions in the downtown area. BSC Group of Worcester is facilitating the effort with the Town Manager’s office, Dept. of Public Works and Dept. of Planning and Development.



Input to date has been gathered by staff input, a public meeting with the Downtown Vitality Committee and the consultants. A desired outcome is to recommend action items to the Board of Selectmen so that policy guidance may be issued to staff.

FEMA Reimbursement for March 13, 2018 Severe Snowstorm: A copy of the Town’s transmittal letter to MEMA seeking the release of \$37,745.92 in disaster relief for the March 2018 severe snowstorm is included in your packet. Through the diligent efforts of office staff and administrators within the Dept. of Public Works, the Town documented over \$50,000 in labor and equipment expenses attributable to this storm with 75 percent being eligible for FEMA reimbursement. I offer this so the Board and citizens are reminded of the daily work being done to bring value to our taxpayers and to publicly thank the DPW for a job well-done.

Miscellaneous:

- Held department head and development team meetings
- Participated in collective bargaining negotiations (currently three tentative agreements and one unit outstanding)
- Participated in Silver Lake Park master plan kick-off meeting with the Conway School as organized by Town Planner Eric Smith